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Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promoting rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Yashar Aliyev (Azerbaijan), on the basis of informal consultations

Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promoting rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its decision 2003/287 of 24 July 2003, in which it decided to consider, during its coordination segment in 2004, the theme "Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promoting rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development",

Reaffirming the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council adopted in July 2003,[1]

Recalling the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,[2] and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences, summits and relevant special sessions of the General Assembly,

Recalling also the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, adopted in Rome on 13 June 2002,[3]

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[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/58/3), part one, chap. III, para. 35.

[2] General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[3] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the World Food Summit: five years later, 10-13 June 2002*, part one, appendix; see also A/57/499, annex.

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Reaffirming the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,[4]

Reiterating that the eradication of rural poverty and hunger is crucial for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and that rural development should be pursued through an integrated approach, which encompasses the economic, social and environmental dimensions, takes into account the gender perspective and consists of mutually reinforcing policies and programmes, and which should be balanced, targeted, situation specific, locally owned, include local synergies and initiatives and be responsive to the needs of rural populations,

Recognizing that rural development is the responsibility of each country and is predicated on an enabling national environment, and reaffirming that an enabling international economic environment is important for the support of effective national development efforts, including rural development efforts, that it should combine effective and coherent policies, good governance and accountable institutions at the national and international levels as well as the promotion of gender equality and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, and that robust, broad-based and equitable economic growth as well as human resources development are needed to fight rural poverty,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on a coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promote rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development;[5]

2. *Notes* the efforts made by United Nations organizations to assist developing countries, upon their request, in integrating rural development into their national development strategies, urges them to promote further the integration of this approach into their operational and other activities, to enhance further the efficiency of resources utilization and to continue to work, within their mandates, to this end and, in this regard, emphasizes the need for relevant United Nations agencies to be provided with appropriate resources to promote integrated rural development;

3. *Calls* for enhanced coordination and cooperation among the agencies of the United Nations system, including among the Rome-based agencies, especially at the country level, on the basis of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, in support of national development strategies as well as in enhancing their cooperation with the World Bank and the regional development banks;

4. *Acknowledges* the recent increase in official development assistance allocations to rural development and agriculture, urges developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of providing 0.7 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance to

[4] A/CONF.191/11.
[5] E/2004/58.

developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national product to the least developed countries, as reconfirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,[4] encourages developing countries to build on progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets, acknowledges the efforts of all donors, commends those donors whose official development assistance contributions exceed, reach or are increasing towards the targets, and underlines the importance of undertaking an examination of the means and time frames for achieving the targets and goals;

5. *Invites* the international and regional financial institutions to continue to enhance their support for national efforts for poverty eradication and rural development in developing countries, including the mobilization of public and private investment as well as improved access to credit for the development of rural infrastructure in order to enhance productivity and increase access to markets and information, calls for actions to facilitate the establishment and strengthening of rural financial institutions, including microcredit/microfinancing, savings and insurance facilities and cooperative ventures for rural development, as well as the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and in this regard underlines the importance of the International Year of Microcredit (2005) as a platform to promote these goals;

6. *Recognizes* that, despite serious efforts to achieve progress, important issues in the implementation of the Doha Ministerial Declaration of the World Trade Organization[6] are still outstanding, in particular regarding the commitments for, inter alia, comprehensive negotiations aimed at substantial improvements in market access; that in the agricultural sector, without prejudging the outcome of negotiations, reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies, substantial reduction in trade-distorting domestic support and enhanced market access are needed; that special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all elements of the negotiations, taking development needs fully into account, in a manner consistent with the Doha mandate, including food security and rural development; and that non-trade concerns of countries will also be taken into account, as provided for in the Agreement on Agriculture, in accordance with paragraph 13 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, and urges the United Nations system, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to provide further trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries;

7. *Recognizes also* the vulnerability of the commodity-dependent developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, to market fluctuations, and calls on the United Nations system to support their efforts towards diversification of exports and value-added through processing as a means of increasing export earnings, including through support to enable developing countries to put in place measures that are appropriate and necessary for meeting standards consistent with the provisions of the World Trade Organization and improving terms of trade, and to address the impact of the instability of commodity prices;

[6] A/C.2/56/7, annex.

8. *Stresses* the need to enhance and expand access by developing countries to appropriate technologies that are pro-poor and raise productivity, underlines the need for measures to increase investment in agricultural research, including modern technologies, as well as in natural resources management and capacity-building, and encourages the United Nations system to strengthen support for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research;

9. *Reaffirms* that sustainable agriculture and rural development are essential to the implementation of an integrated approach to food security and safety in an environmentally sustainable way, recognizes the important role of the rural population in sustainably managing natural resources, and calls for enhanced coordination and cooperation among the agencies of the United Nations system in supporting national efforts to promote environmentally sound and sustainable natural resources management;

10. *Reaffirms also* the need to improve access to reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services and resources, taking into account national specificities and circumstances, through various means, such as enhanced rural electrification and decentralized energy systems, increased use of renewables, cleaner liquid and gaseous fuels and enhanced energy efficiency, as well as by intensifying regional and international cooperation and enhancing coordination and cooperation among agencies of the United Nations system, in support of national efforts, including through capacity-building, financial and technological assistance and innovative financing mechanisms, inter alia, at the micro- and meso-levels, recognizing the specific factors for providing access to the poor;

11. *Expresses its serious concern* regarding the severe food shortages and hunger facing millions of people, especially in Africa, recognizes that food security is a global concern and stresses the importance of improving famine prevention mechanisms and long-term food security as well as of responding to emergency food aid needs;

12. *Invites* the United Nations system to further support the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and to address the causes of desertification and land degradation in order to maintain and restore land, as well as addressing poverty resulting from land degradation;

13. *Realizes* that bridging the digital divide will require strong commitment by all stakeholders at the national and international levels, and encourages all efforts by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to assist developing countries in overcoming the digital divide and promoting the use of information and communication technologies to foster economic and social development, particularly in rural areas;

14. *Recognizes* the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on societies and calls for measures by United Nations bodies, especially the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS co-sponsoring agencies, and development partners to further mainstream HIV/AIDS concerns into rural development planning, including poverty eradication and food security strategies and multisectoral development activities covering economic and social aspects, including the gender perspective;

15. *Invites* the relevant United Nations organizations dealing with issues of development to strengthen their cooperation in addressing and supporting the empowerment and the specific needs of rural women in their programmes and strategies;

16. *Stresses* that the United Nations system should improve its coordination in supporting national efforts to increase the school enrolment rate, especially of the girl child, and to provide quality education for the rural poor, inter alia, through mobilizing the necessary financial and technical resources, including the full utilization of modern methodologies and technologies as well as the establishment of distance learning education systems;

17. *Recognizes* the importance of employment for pro-poor growth in rural areas, and encourages the United Nations system and development partners to assist countries, upon their request, in mainstreaming employment into investment policy and poverty reduction strategies, including those focused on rural area development;

18. *Invites* the United Nations system to further assist developing countries in their efforts to enhance access by the rural poor to productive assets, especially land and water, in order to promote social and economic development;

19. *Calls* on the United Nations system to further support capacity-building programmes for, and exchanges of experience on, rural development through enhanced coordination and information exchange mechanisms such as the United Nations System Network on Rural Development and Food Security;

20. *Stresses* that the United Nations system should further support regional and subregional initiatives, where appropriate, in order to promote an integrated approach to rural development, and requests the United Nations regional commissions to further enhance regional and interregional cooperation, in particular for sharing best practices;

21. *Calls* on the United Nations system and regional organizations to undertake measures to further promote South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, in the area of rural development, and in this regard underlines the need for increased cooperation among bodies of the United Nations system to promote South-South cooperation;

22. *Notes* the work of the United Nations system on partnerships, welcomes the establishment of a multitude of partnerships for sustainable rural development at the field level entered into by various United Nations agencies, Member States, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general, and encourages the United Nations system to continue to promote partnerships at the national and international levels in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions.